

National Gathering on Unmarked Burials:

The Release of an Indigenous-led
Reparations Framework

October 29-30, 2024
Hilton Lac Leamy
Gatineau, QC



**Office of the Independent
Special Interlocutor**

for Missing Children and Unmarked
Graves and Burial Sites associated
with Indian Residential Schools

Wellness and Cultural Health Supports will be available throughout the Gathering



Logo of the Office of the Special Interlocutor

Representing strength, family and healing, bears are the primary element in the Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor's logo. The larger bear represents the parent, family, and community, while the smaller bear symbolizes the children who were stolen and never returned.

The Northern Lights in the night sky are the Spirits of our ancestors dancing. The dancing guides the children to reunite with their ancestors.

The stars depict the connection between the children taken from their communities and the parents left behind, who would stare at the same stars longing to be reunited.

The flowers in the larger bear signify life and the resilience of Indigenous Peoples.

The changing colours in the dotted path illustrate the on-going search for truth, justice and healing. The three pairs of moccasins honour and acknowledge all First Nations, Inuit and Métis children.

At the first National Gathering on Unmarked Burials in Treaty 6 territory, Regional Chief Gerald Antoine observed that on the back of the larger bear, there is a clear outline of a child's face looking up at the sky. Although this was not intentionally part of the design, it has shown us yet another way that the children's Spirits are speaking to us all.



*“For the child taken,
For the parent left behind.”*

TRC Interim Report, 2012

Welcome



Kimberly R. Murray

Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools

I am honoured to welcome you to the seventh National Gathering on Missing Children and Unmarked Burials, which will focus on the delivery of an Indigenous-led Reparations Framework.

I begin by acknowledging that we are gathering on the traditional unceded territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin who have been the caretakers of these lands and waters for millennia. I also recognize that Gatineau/Ottawa has been, and continues to be, the home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

Since June 2022, when my Mandate as the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burials Sites commenced, I have been listening to and learning from Survivors, their families, and communities. The truths that I have heard must inform a new legal framework to respectfully and appropriately recover, protect, and honour the missing and disappeared children and their burials. Many families are still searching for the truth. They want to know what happened to their loved ones who were forcibly disappeared and never returned home. How did they die? Where did they die? Where are they buried? Were they buried at the former site of an Indian Residential School or at one of the many other institutions that the children were transferred to by government and church officials? Are they thousands of miles away in another province? Are they buried in a mass grave with many other Indigenous children? Is their grave marked with their name in a well-tended cemetery or do they lie anonymously in a long-forgotten burial site?

Like all parents, grandparents, and family members, they deserve answers to their questions. Indigenous children, who were treated with callous and dehumanizing cruelty in life at Indian Residential Schools, deserve respect and human dignity in death. Their burial sites must be located, protected, and commemorated so that families can go there to grieve and remember, to offer prayers, to put down tobacco and other Sacred Medicines, and lay flowers to honour the memories of the children who died while in the custody of the State.

Of the many human rights violations inflicted on Indigenous children and their families the disappearances and deaths of thousands of Indigenous children is the ultimate act of injustice. Under international law, Survivors, Indigenous families, and communities, who are victims of genocide, crimes against humanity, and mass human rights violations have the right to know the truth and they have the right to reparations for these egregious harms.

With the release of the [*Sites of Truth, Sites of Conscience*](#) in July 2024, further evidence was provided to Canadians about the crimes and human rights abuses that were perpetrated against Indigenous children in State-sanctioned, church-run institutions. The factual documentation is indisputable. Although difficult to read, I encourage you to view the Report to better understand why an Indigenous-led Reparations Framework is required.

To be effective the new legal framework requires more than minor tinkering with existing legislation. Over the next two days, we will discuss what reforms are needed to truly honour, respect, protect, and bring dignity to the Spirits and bodies of the children that were never returned home. As we have these discussions, let us keep these little ones in our minds and in our hearts.



Mandate of the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools

The Special Interlocutor will identify needed measures and make recommendations for a new federal legal framework to ensure the respectful and culturally appropriate treatment of unmarked graves and burial sites of children associated with former residential schools. This will be done in close collaboration with First Nations, Inuit and Métis governments, representative organizations, communities, Survivors and families, other departments of the Government of Canada, provinces and territories, and other relevant institutions such as church entities and record holders.

The Special Interlocutor will function independently and impartially, in a non-partisan and transparent manner to achieve the objectives of her mandate.

The Special Interlocutor has a two-year mandate and will deliver interim and final reports, with recommendations, to the federal Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada. Knowledge shared at this National Gathering will inform the interim and final reports and recommendations.

The work of the Special Interlocutor will

Engage

with First Nations, Inuit and Métis governments, representative organizations, communities, Survivors and families to discuss issues of concern around the identification, preservation, and protection of unmarked graves and burial sites, including the potential repatriation of remains

Examine

the existing federal, provincial and territorial laws, regulations, tools and practices that currently apply and have applied to protect unmarked graves and burial sites connected to former Indian Residential Schools, as well as applicable Indigenous laws and protocols, in order to develop a description of the current legal framework

Identify

areas of improvement in Canadian law and make recommendations for a new federal legal framework to identify, protect, and preserve unmarked burial sites connected to former Indian Residential Schools and lands associated with the institutions

At the Gathering

The Ballroom is located on Level B of the Hilton.

All breakfasts and lunches will be provided to registered attendees.

Session materials will be available in the language presented and simultaneous translation in French and English will be available.

The sessions taking place in the Mozart Ballroom and the Delivery of an Indigenous-led Reparations Framework by Kimberly Murray, Independent Special Interlocutor will be live-streamed.

Representatives from various media outlets will be present at the Gathering. An announcement will be made to inform attendees.

The National Gathering is a public event and photography, audio and video recording will occur. By attending the event, all attendees consent to the potential release and publication of photos and audio/video recordings by the Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor (OSI). If you have concerns about this, please speak with a staff member from the OSI.

Sacred Fire Protocols

Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island have used Sacred Fires for healing and to offer medicines to those in need of prayers and those who have passed to the Spirit World.

A Sacred Fire will be lit on the first morning of the Gathering and will be tended to by Head Firekeeper, Elder Peter DeContie, throughout the duration of the Gathering. Ashes from the Sacred Fires held at the previous National Gatherings in Edmonton, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Iqaluit will be added to the lighting of the Sacred Fire.

All people are invited to visit the Sacred Fire to make offerings.

Please help us follow, honour, and respect protocols around the Sacred Fire. The Firekeepers have been entrusted with tending to this flame and deserve the utmost respect.

Wellness and Cultural Health Supports

Trauma-informed and culturally appropriate health and wellness supports will be provided throughout the Gathering. Due to the difficult content that will be discussed, participants are encouraged to access these supports as needed, at any time during the Gathering. There will be regular reminders and information about where and how to access support services.



Statement Gathering



The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), will be present to share information about accessing residential school records and to gather stories and experiences in one-on-one statements and sharing circles. Statements will be audio and video recorded, honoured, and preserved at the Centre.

Statement Providers are welcome to speak on any issues including Residential and Day Schools, Intergenerational experiences, the Sixties Scoop, Indian Hospitals and Sanatoriums, and MMIWG2S+. The aim is to create a permanent record of what has happened as a result of Residential Schools and other colonial systems, assist community research for missing children and unmarked burials, and be a witness to the ongoing impacts of settler-colonialism.

For more information or to pre-register:

nctrsg@umanitoba.ca | 431-998-0768

Artistic Expression



Aysanabee

Aysanabee is a multi-instrumentalist, producer and singer songwriter currently based in Toronto. He is Oji-Cree, Sucker Clan of the Sandy Lake First Nation a remote fly-in community in the far reaches of Northwestern Ontario.

On Mar 23, 2024, Aysanabee made history as the first ever Indigenous Artist to win the JUNO Awards for Alternative Album of the Year and the coveted Songwriter of the Year, for *Here and Now*. He followed up the wins with a memorable performance on the awards broadcast with a tribute to Robbie Robertson and Gordon Lightfoot alongside Allison Russell, William Prince, Julian Taylor, Shawnee Kish, Logan Staats, and the *Rainbow Coalition*.

Aysanabee has performed more than 200 shows on major stages and festivals and venues across Canada and globally including Ottawa Bluesfest, Osheaga, Montreal Jazzfest, Tönder Music Festival, AmericanaFest UK, Wake the Giant and many more. The *Here And Now* EP tour included cross Canada tours with Dan Mangan and Allison Russell.

The artist has shared the stage with such notable acts including *The National*, *Digging Roots*, *Amanda Rheaume*, *Sam Roberts Band*, *Our Lady Peace*, *DJ Shub*, *Julian Taylor*, *Jeremy Dutcher*, *Dan Mangan*, *Mavis Staples*, *July Talk*, *Half Moon Run*, *Tokyo Police Club*, *Aqua*, and more.



Sylvia Cloutier

Sylvia Cloutier is a performer, actor, musician, playwright, television and theatre producer, director, motivational speaker and mother from Kuujjuaq, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), currently residing in Montreal.

Over the course of her illustrious twenty-five-year career as a singer, she has performed nationally and internationally both as a solo artist and in collaboration with many esteemed artists and ensembles including Tafelmusik, the National Art Center Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal.

A recent graduate of the National Theatre School in Montreal as the Indigenous artist-in-residence (2018-2020). Cloutier is the co-founder of the Inuit performing arts company Aqsarniit; served as Artistic Director of Qaggiq theatre company in Iqaluit from 2004-2009; and as theatre project manager in Kuujjuaq, Nunavik (2008-2010).



Theland Kicknosway

Theland Kicknosway is an Indigenous youth trailblazer who utilizes his voice to spread his message and showcase Indigenous culture. He is wolf clan from the Potawatomi and Cree Nations and is a member of Walpole Island, Bkejwanong Territory.

He has been featured in CBC Arts and CBC News, Flare, Teen Vogue, Complex, and Huffington Post Canada. Theland has gained recognition in the Indigenous community and worldwide as a traditional singer, flute player, hoop dancer, activist & influencer. Theland ranked 7th in the world after returning from the 2023 World Hoop Dance Championship in Phoenix, Arizona.

Theland has made a name for himself as a staple in the Indigenous community on TikTok as @the_landk. With nearly 450,000 followers and over 10 million accumulated "likes", Theland is an important contributor to #NativeTikTok.

Interesting Facts: Theland was the youngest Indspire Laureate named for Culture, Heritage and Spirituality in 2018.

AGENDA

Tuesday, October 29th

Time	Event	Location
7:00 am	Lighting of the Sacred Fire	Terrace
8:00 - 9:15 am	Registration Opens Buffet Breakfast	Foyer A Foyer A
9:15 - 10:00 am	Gathering Co-Chair: Kyra De La Ronde , Red River Métis, MB Welcome Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Big Drum ▪ Opening Prayer ▪ Lighting of Qulliq ▪ Empty Chair Ceremony ▪ Spirit Dish Offering 	Mozart Ballroom
10:00 - 10:15 am	Welcome to the Territory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg 	Mozart Ballroom
10:15 am	Wellness Break	Foyer A
10:30 am - 12:00 pm	Remarks by Kimberly Murray, Independent Special Interlocutor Video Honouring Ceremony of Survivor and Youth Panelists	Mozart Ballroom
12:00 - 1:00 pm	Lunch Registration for Release of Framework	Foyer A Theatre du Casino Foyer

Tuesday, October 29th

Time	Event	Location
1:00 - 3:00 pm	<p>Delivery of an Indigenous-led Reparations Framework by Kimberly Murray, Independent Special Interlocutor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remarks by The Honourable Arif Virani, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada ▪ Cultural Healing Ceremony ▪ Cultural Performance <p>Moderator Donald E. Worme, Q.C., I.P.C., Senior Partner, Semaganis Worme Legal</p>	Theatre du Casino
3:00 pm	Wellness Break	Foyer A
3:15 - 4:15 pm	Interactive Breakout Sessions	
	Session 1: Survivors Sharing Circle, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR)	Suzor-Cote
	Session 2: Healing Sessions led by Knowledge Keepers	Theatre du Casino
	Session 3: Healing Sessions led by Knowledge Keepers	Terrace (Sacred Fire)
	Session 4: Healing Sessions led by Knowledge Keepers	Delfosse
6:00 - 8:00 pm	<p>Dinner Chair: Stephanie Nirlungayuk, Tunngasugit Inuit</p> <p>Opening Song</p> <p>Remarks: OSI Youth</p> <p>Keynote: Leah Gazan, NDP MP, Winnipeg Centre, MB</p> <p>Performance : Aysanabee, Singer-Songwriter, Sandy Lake First Nation, ON</p>	Mozart Ballroom

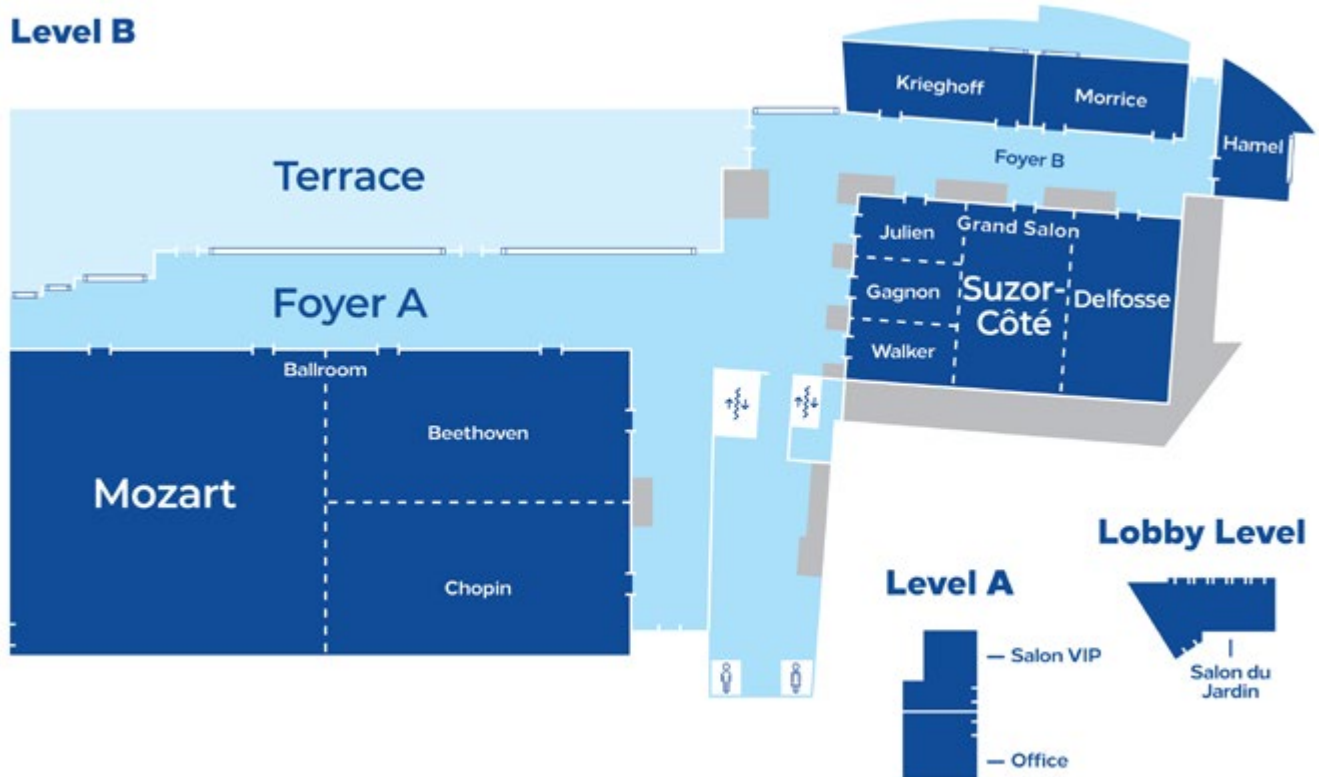
Wednesday, October 30th

Time	Event	Location
7:00 am	Opening Ceremony	Mozart Ballroom
7:45 - 8:45 am	Breakfast	Foyer A
8:45 - 9:00 am	Remarks by Gathering Chair Donald E. Worme, Q.C., I.P.C. , Senior Partner, Semaganis Worme Legal	Mozart Ballroom
9:00 - 10:00 am	Remarks by National Indigenous Leadership	Mozart Ballroom
10:00 am	Wellness Break	Foyer A
10:15 - 11:30 am	<p>Panel Discussion: Addressing Denialism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, BC ▪ Dr. Sean Carleton, Historian and Indigenous Studies Scholar, University of Manitoba ▪ Ben Rowswell, Convenor, the Remembering Project <p>Moderator Tanya Talaga, Canadian Journalist and Author</p>	Mozart Ballroom
11:30 am - 12:00 pm	<p>Presentation: Protecting Our Ancestors Conference Final Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grand Chief Garrison Settee, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), MB ▪ Councillor Melissa Hotain, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, MB 	Mozart Ballroom
12:00 - 1:00 pm	Lunch	Foyer A

Wednesday, October 30th

Time	Event	Location
1:00 - 2:30 pm	<p>Panel Discussion: Enforced Disappearances and Settler Amnesty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr. Mark Kersten, Assistant Professor Criminology & Criminal Justice, University of the Fraser Valley ▪ Ovide Mercredi, O.C., O.M., Lawyer and Indigenous leader ▪ Fannie Lafontaine, Canada Research Chair in International Criminal Justice and Human Rights <p>Facilitator Dr. Beverly Jacobs, C.M., LL.B., LL.M., Senior Advisor to the President on Indigenous Relations and Outreach, University of Windsor</p>	Mozart Ballroom
2:30 - 3:00 pm	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empty Chair Ceremony 	Mozart Ballroom

Map of Venue



Cultural Advisors



**Elder Claudette
Commanda**

Claudette Commanda is an Algonquin Anishinabe from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation located in the province of Quebec. An alumna of the University of Ottawa faculties of Law and Arts, Claudette has dedicated the last 35 years promoting First Nations people, history, culture and rights in various capacities as a University of Ottawa student, professor, member and chair of the Aboriginal education council, and via public speaking events.

She is the chief executive officer of the First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres, a national organization that protects and promotes First Nations culture, languages and traditional knowledge. She is also the CEO of Maclean Day Schools Settlement Corporation. Ms. Commanda has taught at the University of Ottawa's Institute of Women's Studies, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Law and the Indigenous Studies Program, teaching courses on First Nations Women, Native Education, First Nations People and History, Indigenous Traditions, and Decolonization. She was inducted into the Common Law Honour Society, served two terms on the Board of Governors for the First Nations University of Canada and three terms on the Kitigan Zibi band council.

In 2017, Claudette was the first appointed First Nation Elder in Residence for the Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa, and the first person of a First Nation heritage to be complete a full term on the Board of Governors for the University of Ottawa. She was also the Special Adviser on Reconciliation, for the Susan & Perry Dellelce Dean, Faculty of Law (Common Law Section). Claudette is a proud mother of four and a grandmother of 10.



Fred McGregor

Fred is a proud member of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation where he resides with his wife and son. Having grown up and living in Kitigan Zibi, Fred's cultural and spiritual knowledge came from working with his community traditional Elders and Knowledge Keepers. He was mentored by the renowned spiritual leader, the late Elder William Commanda, Carrier of the Sacred Wampum Belts. Today, Fred is actively involved in his community and travels throughout the Algonquin Territory sharing the teachings that were gifted to him. Fred is an avid storyteller and continues to learn by working with his Elder and Sacred Fire Keeper, Peter Decontie and Anishnabeg Knowledge Keepers. Fred enlightens us with knowledge and teachings through story.

Keynote Speaker



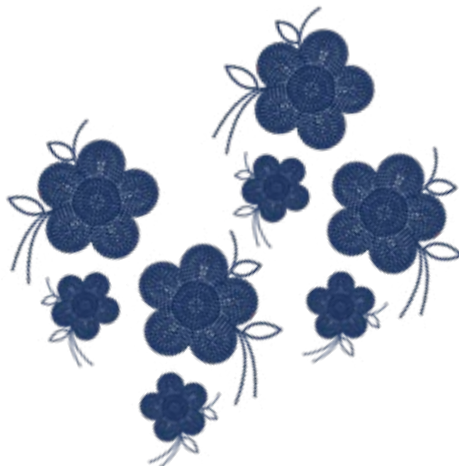
Leah Gazan

Leah Gazan has been the NDP Member of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre since 2019. She is the NDP Critic for Families, Children, and Social Development; Critic for Women and Gender Equality; and Critic for Post-Secondary Education. Gazan is a member of Wood Mountain Lakota Nation, located in Saskatchewan, Treaty 4 territory.

In 2021, Gazan introduced Bill C-223, the National Framework for a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income Act, which builds on a previous motion (M-46) she tabled to convert the Canada Emergency Response Benefit into a permanent GLBI. She previously introduced Bill C-232, the Climate Emergency Action Act, in 2019, which aimed to enshrine the right to a healthy environment as a human right.

In an historic first, the House of Commons gave unanimous consent to Gazan's motion recognizing residential schools as an act of genocide in 2022, the first recognition of a genocide committed in Canada. In 2023, history was made again when she received unanimous consent for her motion to recognize the ongoing genocide of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit Individuals as a Canada-wide emergency. Both of these historic votes were the result of the tireless work of families, survivors, and advocates, supported by Gazan in Parliament.

Gazan has spent her life working for human rights on the local, national and international stage. As an educator, advisor, and media contributor, Gazan has been deeply engaged with issues and organizing in Winnipeg's core for more than three decades. As president of the Social Planning Council between 2011- 2015, Gazan organized and pushed policy to end poverty, addressing violence against women and girls, finding solutions for housing insecurity and homelessness, advocating for fair wages, community-based actions addressing addictions, and supports for mental health. Gazan was a prominent Winnipeg lead during Idle No More, articulating the movement to the Winnipeg public. Gazan also co-founded the #WeCare campaign aimed at building public will to end violence against Indigenous women and girls.



Gathering Co-Chairs



**Kyra
De La Ronde**

Kyra De La Ronde is a proud Red River Métis, whose family comes from Duck Bay, MB. Kyra previously represented the voice of Red River Métis youth from the grassroots to national level. In 2022 she completed her term as the Youth Rep. for the Manitoba Métis Federation – National Government of the Red River Métis. A graduate Red River College Polytechnic in the Indigenous School of Education – Kyra has a background in Economics, Indigenous Community Development, and Indigenous Governance. With guidance from Elders, Kyra took her experiences from community and her education and has begun her career as a Policy Analyst working for the Manitoba Métis Federation.



**Stephanie
Nirlungayuk**

Stephanie is a proud urban Inuk who lives in Winnipeg Manitoba, she belongs to the remote community of Kugaaruk, Nunavut in the central Arctic. She serves as the vice president on the board of directors for Tunngasugit Inuit Resource Centre, and has a diverse background in cultural consulting, operations management and is dedicated to addressing social issues in her community by using wholistic and sustainable approaches to ensure indigenous peoples live in safe, healthy and thriving communities.



**Donald E.
Worme**

Donald E. Worme, Q.C., IPC, a Cree lawyer from the Kawacatoose First Nation, Treaty Four, Saskatchewan, is one of the leading advocates in the province for human rights, criminal law and treaty litigation, and is a founding member of the Indigenous Bar Association of Canada. Mr. Worme received his call to the Saskatchewan Bar in 1986, and currently practices at Semaganis Worme Legal in Saskatoon.

Mr. Worme has served on several commissions and inquiries. Of note is his work as Commission Counsel during the Ipperwash Judicial Inquiry, as Lead Counsel to the family of Neil Stonechild in the judicial inquiry into the “Starlight Tours” and as Lead Commission Counsel for the Truth & Reconciliation Commission.

Mr. Worme has been consistently named a leader in the field of Indigenous law, appointed as Queen’s Counsel in 2002 and as Indigenous People’s Council in 2006. He was awarded a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in the field of Law and Justice in 2010 and was named as the University of Saskatchewan’s Top 100 Alumni of Influence.

Gathering Speakers



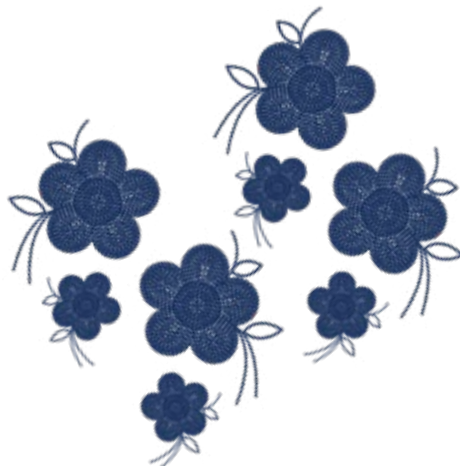
**Dr. Sean
Carleton**

Dr. Sean Carleton is a settler historian and an associate professor of history and Indigenous studies at the University of Manitoba. His research examines the history of schooling and settler colonialism in British Columbia. He is the author of the award-winning book *Lessons in Legitimacy: Colonialism, Capitalism, and the Rise of State Schooling in British Columbia*, published by UBC Press in 2022. Additionally, he serves as the Historical Consultant for the Squamish Nation's Yúusnew'as (pronounced Yos-na-wass) project, which investigates the history and legacy of the St. Paul's residential school in North Vancouver, British Columbia.



**Kúkpi7
Rosanne
Casimir**

Kúkpi7 Rosanne Casimir has extensive political experience at the community, municipal, provincial, and federal levels, which supports her drive to advance community-driven initiatives that uphold the rights to self-determination and self-reliance while building friendships to inspire meaningful steps and change. Serving her community for 15 years, she has been an elected Tribal Chief for the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council and a Board Director for the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations. She is a powerful advocate for her community of TteS, effectively working towards meaningful reconciliation and upholding honor, respect, and recognition for those who never made it home. She brought to light the horrific truths of the 215 (Le Estcwicwéy), amplifying the need for Canada to reflect on our true collective history. Real action and change are needed to support healing. Together, through unity, we can rebuild and heal our communities, redefine our paths, and create widespread change.



Gathering Speakers



Melissa Hotain

Melissa Hotain was recently elected to Council for the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, in what is now Southern Manitoba, a role she previously undertook over 20 years ago, and has come full circle. With a background in environmental studies, Melissa Hotain spent ten years working in policy analysis for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) on First Nations environmental and legislation issues. She was responsible for research, planning, policy analysis and strategic development related to the environment and First Nation matters, and participated in various regional, national, and international committees dealing with land, water, and environmental issues.

Following the AFN she came home to work as Director of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, Manitoba, leading the self-government file and the implementation of the Governance Agreement.

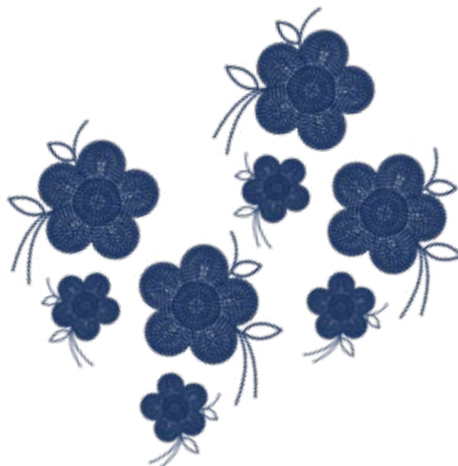
She strongly believes in working to revitalize and apply traditional knowledge based on the philosophy of assessing actions and decisions based on the health and well-being of our future generations.



**Dr. Beverley
Jacobs**

Mohawk Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Bear Clan

Dr. Beverley Jacobs is the Senior Advisor to the President on Indigenous Relations and Outreach at the University of Windsor and she practices law part-time at her home community of Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. In addition, she is the Indigenous Human Rights Monitor with the Mohawk Institute Residential School Survivors' Secretariat, which was established in 2021 to organize and support efforts to uncover, document and share the truth about what happened at the Mohawk Institute during its 136 years of operation. Beverley obtained a Bachelor of Law Degree from the University of Windsor in 1994, a Master of Law Degree from the University of Saskatchewan in 2000 and a PhD from the University of Calgary in 2018. She has dedicated her career to ending gendered colonial violence against Indigenous people and restoring Indigenous laws, beliefs, values, and traditions.



Gathering Speakers



**Dr. Mark
Kersten**

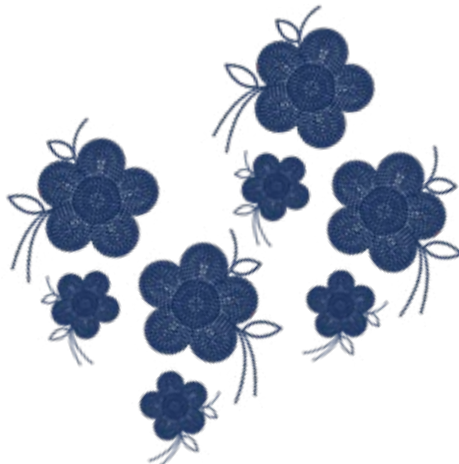
Mark Kersten is an Assistant Professor in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at the University of the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, and a Senior Consultant at the Wayamo Foundation in Berlin, Germany. From 2023-2024, Mark worked as a legal researcher for the Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools, focusing on the application of international criminal law and international human rights law.

Mark is the founder of the blog Justice in Conflict and author of the book, published by Oxford University Press, by the same name. He teaches courses in Canadian law, international crimes, transitional justice, diplomacy, and conflict and peace studies. Mark's research has appeared in numerous academic journals and in media publications. He has a passion for gardening, reading, hockey (on ice), date nights, late nights, Lego, and spending time with loved ones.



**Fannie
Lafontaine**

Fannie Lafontaine is a lawyer, full professor at the Faculty of Law at Université Laval and Canada Research Chair on International Criminal Justice and Human Rights. Before joining Laval University, she worked at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, on the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur and in NGOs and law firms. From 2015-2020, she acted as independent civilian observer of a criminal investigation into criminal acts alleged to have been committed by members of different police forces against Indigenous People in Quebec. She was the lead drafter of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' 2019 Supplementary Report "Legal analysis on genocide". In 2021, she was elected by the Canadian Lawyer Magazine in its prestigious annual Canada's Top 25 Most Influential Lawyers. The Canadian Partnership for International Justice that she leads was awarded the SSHRC Impact Award (Partnership Award) in 2022 and the Governor General's Innovation Award in 2023.



Gathering Speakers



**Ovide William
Mercredi**

Ovide Mercredi is a Cree, born in the northern community of Grand Rapids, Manitoba. A graduate of the University of Manitoba's Robson Hall Faculty of Law in 1977, he practiced criminal law and later specialized in constitutional law as an advisor to Manitoba Chiefs.

In 1989, Ovide was elected Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations for Manitoba as well as appointed a member of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. He became a key strategist for the Assembly during the Meech Lake Accord constitutional reform discussions.

On June 12, 1991, Ovide, was elected National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, a role that he held for two terms from 1991 to 1997. During his term, he led the negotiations for the First Nations in the Charlottetown Accord.

He served as Chief of Misipawistik Cree Nation from 2005 to 2011 and acted as a counsellor for three years after his terms as Chief.

Ovide, became the first chancellor of Manitoba's University College of the North in 2007 and was selected as the National Spokesperson for Treaties 1 to 11 from 2006 to 2014.

Currently, Ovide is advocating to help to transform health services for those living in the in Northern Ontario.



Ben Rowswell

Ben Rowswell is the founder of the Remembering Project, a movement of non-Indigenous Canadians who acknowledge our collective responsibility for the harm caused by the residential school system. Remembering Project volunteers support survivor committees in their search for missing and disappeared children, contributing to our shared understanding of the truth as a prerequisite for reconciliation.

Ben previously served as President of the Canadian International Council, Canada's Ambassador to Venezuela, Representative of Canada in Kandahar, Charge d'Affaires to Iraq and cofounder of the civic technology startup Betterplace.

Gathering Speakers



**Grand Chief
Garrison Settee**

Garrison Settee, from the Pimicikamak Cree Nation, is Ininiw and was raised in a Cree-speaking home with strong spiritual values. He is a passionate advocate for MMIWG and Two Spirit people, as well as First Nations children impacted by the child welfare system. He has represented MKO at the UN in Geneva, exposing Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples, and played a key role in lobbying for Jordan's Principle. As Chief he led the call for an inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, acknowledging the need for greater action. He was recently re-elected to a third term as MKO Grand Chief.

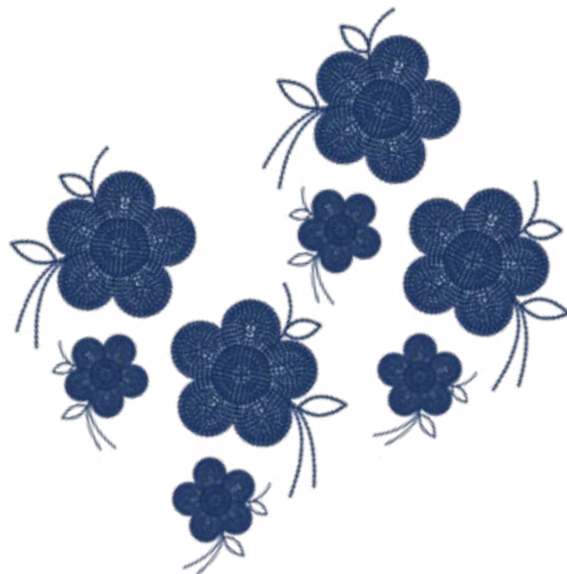


Tanya Talaga

Tanya Talaga, is of Anishinaabe and Polish descent. Her mother was raised on the traditional territory of Fort William First Nation and Treaty 9. Her father was Polish Canadian. Tanya is a proud member of Fort William First Nation.

A journalist, Talaga spent more than twenty years at the Toronto Star and she is now a regular columnist at the Globe and Mail. She is the acclaimed author of three national bestsellers *Seven Fallen Feathers*, *All Our Relations: Finding the Path Forward*, and *The Knowing*, which is also a four-part documentary CBC series.

Talaga is the founder of Makwa Creative, a production company formed to elevate Indigenous voices and stories through documentary films, including the Canadian Screen Award nominated *War For The Woods*.



Gathering Speakers



**The Honourable
Arif Virani**

The Honourable Arif Virani was first elected as the Member of Parliament for Parkdale—High Park in 2015. He has previously served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), and as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

Minister Virani is an Ismaili Muslim who came to Canada in 1972 as a Ugandan Asian refugee. Before entering politics, he practised law for 15 years, starting his career as a civil litigator at Fasken Martineau and subsequently working as a constitutional litigator at the Ministry of the Attorney General of Ontario, advocating for human rights and access to justice.

Minister Virani previously worked as an analyst with the Canadian Human Rights Commission in Ottawa, an investigator at the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse in Montréal, and an Assistant Trial Attorney prosecuting genocide at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. He was a consultant on police reform with the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative in India, and was also one of the founding board members of the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario in Toronto, which provides direct legal services for low-income people of South Asian heritage.

Minister Virani has been an active volunteer in his community. He is a supporter of The Redwood, a shelter for women and children fleeing abuse, has frequently helped at the Parkdale Community Food Bank, and still maintains his role as “Sorauren Park Hoser” – assisting with the community rink build each winter. Prior to his first election, he was also an active volunteer with RoncyWorks, a network of neighbours, business owners, and organizations that work together to improve community space, and led community efforts in Parkdale—High Park to address mental health stigma.

Minister Virani received the 2001 Harold G. Fox litigation scholarship at the Middle Temple in London, United Kingdom, and the 2008 Wilson-Prichard Award from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law in recognition of his contributions to the legal profession and his community.

Minister Virani holds a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science (Honours) from McGill University, and completed his Bachelor of Laws at the University of Toronto, where he graduated as valedictorian. He speaks English, French, and some Hindi – his Polish, Ukrainian, and Tibetan are works in progress. He is married and the active coach of his two sons.

Information Booths



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canadiangeographic.ca



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www.knowhistory.ca



Future Generations Foundation

fgfoundation.ca



National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

nctr.ca



Gratitude for their Contributions





Acknowledgement and Appreciation

The Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor is pleased to have partnered with Associated Marketing Professionals (AMP) for this final National Gathering.

Special thank you to Survivors, families, Indigenous Leaders, and community members who are searching for the Missing and Disappeared Children and Unmarked Burials.

We appreciate the dedication of the Health, Wellness, and Cultural Supports and all the volunteers who cared for everyone during the National Gathering.

We also sincerely thank the Co-Chairs; Kyra De La Ronde, Stephanie Nirlungayuk and Donald E. Worme and the Algonquin Cultural Advisors; Claudette Commanda and Fred McGregor for all of their support.

Lastly, Chief Jean-Guy Whiteduck and the Elected Band Council of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation for welcoming us into their Traditional Territory.

For more information about the Office of the Independent
Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked
Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential
Schools, please visit our website at: osi-bis.ca
or email: info@osi-bis.ca



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